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UNCLASSIFIED

DATE: 8 September 1989

NOTE TO: [redacted] (b)(3) (b)(6)

SUBJECT: FAC - DRAFT

THE WASHINGTON COLOR SCHOOL

The paintings in this central concourse and in the one to your left are the work of artists from the 1950s and 1960s who have collectively become known as the Washington Color School. It includes such painters as Gene Davis, Morris Louis, _____ who are generally regarded among the leading exponents of Washington abstract painting.

This kind of painting is related to the abstract expressionism that was created in New York City during the 1950s by such leading painters as Jackson Pollack, Helen Frankenthaler, and Willem de Kooning. Their large canvases of bold color applied in unconventional ways stimulated Morris Louis and other Washington artists whose work you see here.

These painters with the crisp simple forms they made put the capital city on the art world map. Their experiments dealt with color as structure and as a vibrant field. Other examples of the work of Washington Color painters can be seen at the National Gallery, the Corcoran, and the National Museum of American Art--as well as in Washington hotels and office buildings.

This art, like all art, is meant to be looked at. So, before deciding whether you like it, take some time to look at it.

In smaller type to the right: The CIA Library has about a half dozen catalogs on the Washington Color School painters. They can be found in the Mezzanine under _____.

In smaller type to the left: These paintings were initially made available through the generosity of Vincent Melzac, a friend of the agency's and a collector of modern art and an early champion of the innovative work of these artists. } Fine Arts Files

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